

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WELCOMES ALTON HART JR., MD, MPH, AS CRATER HEALTH DISTRICT DIRECTOR

(Petersburg, Va.) – The Virginia Department of Health's (VDH) Crater Health District welcomes Alton Hart Jr., MD, MPH, as the district's new Public Health Director on Monday, July 2, 2012.

"We are fortunate to have a physician with Dr. Hart's experience to lead the Crater Health District," said Jeff Lake, VDH's deputy commissioner for Community Health Services. "His clinical, academic and public health experience will make him a valuable resource for the district's health care providers and a trusted advisor for its residents, local government, and community partners."

"As the new Public Health Director, I look forward to strengthening community partnerships and engaging the community as we join forces to improve health for citizens of the Crater Health District," shared Dr. Alton Hart.

Dr. Hart earned his Doctor of Medicine Degree from the Medical College of Georgia and his Master's of Public Health from the University of Washington (UW) in Seattle. While at the UW, he also completed the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program, a research fellowship for physicians. Dr. Hart is a board certified internist by the American Board of Internal Medicine.

For the past four years, Dr. Hart has been the Associate Scientific Director for the Center on Health Disparities at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). He has also served as the Medical Director for Massey Cancer Center's Adult Cancer Survivorship Clinic, and held an appointment in the School of Medicine as an Associate Professor of Medicine.

Prior to joining VCU, Dr. Hart was an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Medicine at the UW Harborview Medical Center where his research focused on diabetes self-management. He was also a Senior Research Fellow and a member of the Behavioral Evaluation Studies Team at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center (FHCRC) in Seattle. He served as a co-investigator for the Eating for a Healthy Life Study, a National Cancer Institute (NCI) funded dietary study for cancer prevention conducted in faith communities.

While at VCU, Dr. Hart's research focused primarily on African-American men in partnership with barbershops located in the Richmond area. Dr. Hart partnered with a research network comprised of 30 African-American barbershops. He served as principal investigator on an American Cancer Society

funded study to develop an interactive computer-based program to help African-American men make informed decisions about prostate cancer screening. Dr. Hart also served as principal investigator on a NCI funded project titled, "Exploring Cigarette Dependence among African-American Males in Barbershops."

Dr. Hart's honors include, a 2011 Telly Award for Video and Film for his prostate cancer educational video, and recent selection as a mentor in the National Cancer Institute's Research to Reality Mentoring Program, a program focused on evidence-based public health practice.



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